



Adaptive Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Contemporary and Future Armed Conflicts

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Since the 1990s, mediation and conflict resolution processes have often been intimately related to liberal peacebuilding interventions, helping first to bring the fighting to an end with cease-fire agreements and then shaping the post-conflict phase through more comprehensive peace agreements. A characteristic feature of this period is that the content of the peace agreements typically reveals more about the liberal peace values of the mediators than they do about the values or context-specific interests of the parties to the conflict. Most of these peace agreements share at their core a similar logic and structure, deriving from a determined-designed model based on a liberal peace ideology and the so-called international

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best practices, which tend to be linear, staged, normative, and individualistic in orientation (Bagshaw and Porter 2013). The reality is that, for the most part, domestic actors did not have control over these mediation processes, and third-party mediation became associated with imposed conflict transformation and power mediation (Eriksson and Kostić 2013). It is thus not surprising that Collier and colleagues found that 50 percent of peace agreements reached relapsed into conflict within ten years (Collier et al. 2003).

Since 2010, trends in violent armed conflicts have also been shifting significantly, which has had an impact on the ability of international, national, and local mediators to respond to related crises effectively. David Harland (2018) argues that geopolitical rivalry, the atomization of conflict, and the internationalization of internal conflicts have reduced the space for mediation, pointing to a number of failures in Sri Lanka, Libya, Darfur, South Sudan, Yemen, and Syria as examples to support his argument (see also Lehti 2020; Paffenholz 2021).

One feature of the changing nature of armed conflict is that the drivers of violence tend not to be resolved by peace agreements, because these agreements often result in elite power-sharing arrangements aimed at ending the fighting rather than addressing the causes of the conflict. As a result of this focus on short-term conflict management rather than long-term conflict resolution, tensions frequently reemerge not long after mediation processes are completed. As a consequence, once a country or society is on a violent path, changing its trajectory toward peace becomes more difficult over time.

Today, in many places, from Colombia to the Philippines and from Syria to Mozambique, armed conflicts often coexist with the rise of violent extremism, and this scenario is often coupled with additional human security threats, such as climate change, natural disasters, infectious diseases, and organized crime (OECD 2016; United Nations and World Bank 2018). Therefore, despite the collective desire to achieve sustainable peace in fora such as the United Nations (UN), the effectiveness of mediation to bring an end to violent conflicts is challenged by many conflicts across the world.

One exacerbating factor is that conflicts are more interconnected and complex than ever before. Local conflict dynamics such as marginalization and exclusion can be closely entangled with global jihadist ideologies, and local conflict resolution efforts may be disrupted by major power interventions that have little to do with addressing local conflict drivers. There is

thus a growing sense that the mainstream approach to mediation and peacemaking is unable to address the changing conflict landscape effectively, and there is an interest in exploring alternative approaches to peacemaking that can enrich the peacemaking toolbox available to mediators around the world.

With the recent transition to a more complex and multipolar international order, mediation has become less sought after and more challenging to implement in volatile and uncertain conflict-affected situations (Milián et al. 2019). The peace and security environment after 9/11 dramatically reduced the space for dialogue with especially extremist armed groups that show little interest in recognition of their cause or negotiating for control over existing governing structures. In addition, the rise and fragmentation of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) resulted in more complex and unpredictable scenarios. On the one hand, traditional rebel groups are subject to several challenges deriving from increasingly complex environments, making it difficult for them to decide whether they should engage in dialogue or continue fighting (Zartman and Alfredson 2019). On the other hand, the behavior of decentralized insurgencies, often labeled as violent extremism or terrorism, has limited the effectiveness of regional and international mediation. However, the challenges resulting from NSAGs behavior have also triggered the development of innovative mediation strategies, such as more adaptive and pragmatic negotiations and city-based dialogues involving civil society actors (McQuinn and Courche 2020).

Against this background, a fundamental research problem has been identifying the most effective strategy for mediators amid increasing complexity and uncertainty. In this context, this book introduces adaptive mediation as an alternative approach that enables mediators to go beyond liberal peace mediation or other determined-design models of mediation. Adaptive mediation is an approach to mediation that has its foundations in Complexity Theory, and that is specifically designed to cope with highly dynamic conflict situations characterized by uncertainty and a lack of predictability. Adaptive mediation is also a facilitated mediation process whereby the content of agreements emerges from the parties to the conflict themselves, informed by the context within which the conflict is situated. The core principles and practices of adaptive mediation are presented in this book in conjunction with empirical evidence from four diverse case studies—Colombia, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Syria—in an attempt to generate recommendations for how mediators can apply

adaptive mediation approaches to resolve and transform contemporary and future armed conflicts.

Mediation, conflict management, and conflict resolution are relatively new but expanding research areas of central importance in peace and conflict studies. In the academic literature, mediation has been described as some form of interactive assistance to the conflict parties with the aim of solving a conflict. This assistance is, in general, offered by a third party who lacks the authority to impose an outcome (Kressel and Pruitt 1989). Mediation has also been central to peacebuilding. It can occur at any phase of conflict and intends to eliminate the causes and impact of armed violence to prepare the ground for a more sustained dialogue. Although many have considered mediation as an isolated process that brings about a cease-fire or a political agreement, it may be considered instead as part of a more holistic peacebuilding approach and seen as a comprehensive and ongoing process that supplements other conflict management dimensions (Bercovitch and Kadayifci 2002). The qualities, skills, and methods of mediators are crucial to the effectiveness of mediation, as external mediators need to respond to and consider the context of the conflict to be successful. Today, more complex models of third-party engagement—regional organizations, ad hoc coalitions of actors, and nongovernmental bodies—are increasingly involved in bringing legitimacy to international mediation processes (Crocker et al. 2018).

Since 1945, the UN has been one of the key international organizations advancing the practice and support of mediation processes. According to its charter, peacemaking is an “action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations; Pacific Settlement of Disputes” (United Nations 1945). In the UN system, peacemaking emerges as a conflict resolution tool that intends to move a violent conflict into a non-violent dialogue. The objective of peacemaking in this context is to end violence between the contending parties through a variety of tools: negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and international law mechanisms (Otunnu and Doyle 1998). In addition, the UN views peacekeeping as a technique designed to preserve peace where fighting has been halted and assist in implementing agreements achieved by peacemakers. In the UN system, peacemaking and peacekeeping are also clearly interlinked with peacebuilding, which aims at reducing the risk of conflict by strengthening capacities and addressing the core issues that affect the functioning of the society and the state. Considering the complexity of current armed

conflict trends, the current UN secretary-general, António Guterres, encouraged a new focus on mediation support and facilitation, which entails fostering inclusivity and local engagement, strengthening national capacities, increasing women's participation in peace processes, promoting capacity-building, and professionalizing the field of mediation. The UN is now perceived as more effective in its role as an enabler, emphasizing the importance of greater investment in partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the League of Arab States (United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) 2017).

The providers of international mediation include not only international, regional, and subregional organizations but also states, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals. Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), states have been the dominant actor in the international system and the most frequent provider of conflict mediation. More recently, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council account for most of the state-conducted mediation since 1945, but a number of other countries, such as Finland, Norway, Switzerland, and, more recently, Qatar, have also been recognized as countries that have a special focus on mediation. On the other hand, within the realm of mediation efforts led by faith-based actors, the International Red Cross, the Catholic Church, and smaller religious groups such as the Quakers and the Sant'Egidio Foundation for Peace and Dialogue, have been some of the most active providers. In addition, private individuals, such as the former South African president Nelson Mandela, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, and the former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, have also served as key mediators to armed conflicts around the world (Greig and Diehl 2012). However, the cross-border and highly fragmented nature of current armed conflicts propelled the need to go beyond dominant track-one mediation activities.

As state actors felt reluctant to engage with nonofficial or nonrecognized actors, informal mediation activities conducted by private peacemakers became more common. NGOs such as the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)—Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) became some of the most prominent private peacemakers preparing and engaging in both formal and direct but informal mediation activities (Lehti 2019). Therefore, the last 20 years

have also observed relevant innovations in the field of mediation with the rise of informal peace diplomacy often implemented by these nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Private peacemakers coordinate their mediation activities with official actors and are now increasingly perceived as fundamental mediation actors in contemporary peace processes. The current transformation in peacemaking practices and actors reveals the emergence of alternative methods in the peace mediation field, which Marko Lehti (2020) highlights as a dialogic turn in peacemaking, contrasting it with standard mediation methods and approaches.

A new mediation environment with fragmented and cross-border NSAGs also raises concerns about the impact of a liberal-illiberal divide on the mediators' agency. Mandate-givers are increasingly expecting mediators to be more "inclusive" in their overall strategy. However, mediators are also under pressure to develop mediation processes that purposefully exclude some NSAGs designated as "terrorists," thus adopting a form of illiberal "exclusivity" that prevents these proscribed groups from participating in peace processes (Federer 2019).

On the issue of inclusivity, women and youth remain disproportionately underrepresented. With increasing pressure from women's groups and international actors, women have been gradually more included in mediation initiatives. The United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in the year 2000 brought women, peace, and security onto the UN agenda. It called for recognizing women as peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peacebuilders rather than only as victims of armed conflicts. Since the 2000s, there have been concerted efforts to increase the participation of women in peace negotiations in a variety of ways, including via direct representation at the negotiating table, observer status, informal discussions, and public decision-making. However, research demonstrates that it is women's actual influence on the peace negotiations, not only their formal involvement, that is positively connected with a higher possibility of achieving long-term peace (Paffenholz 2018).

Youth involvement also became a vital component of local peacemaking activities. Many conflict-afflicted contexts have comparably young populations, giving youth a significant role in either sustaining the peace or fueling conflict in their respective sociopolitical environments. Youth can play a crucial role in the mitigation of ongoing armed conflicts and contribute significantly to the dissemination of mediation outcomes, particularly through social media (Pospisil et al. 2020).

On the other hand, digital transformation is also increasingly influencing the mediation context. Digital technologies are being used in a variety of ways. For example, some stakeholders may use social media to put pressure on the parties to the conflict. The mediator and the parties often use social media alongside low-tech forms of media like national and local radio stations to keep the public informed about the progress being made in the mediation process. Once an agreement has been reached, these different forms of media can also be used to share information on the agreement and to encourage support for the cease-fire or peace agreements. Digitalization has increased the volume, scope, and speed with which information can be shared directly between, for example, parties and their supporters. This can be positive when it is encouraging and reinforcing a message of peace, but it can also be used to promote hatred, stir up emotions, and even encourage violence (Hirblinger 2020). Digital platforms have also been utilized for monitoring elections, documenting human rights abuses, and facilitating contact among people of various parties in conflict-affected societies. Information and communication technologies, both digital and web based, can be utilized to prevent and manage armed violence, helping both peacemakers and peacebuilders to foster more positive outcomes (Duursma and Karlsrud 2021).

Despite recent innovations in the field of mediation, conflict management, and conflict resolution, newly signed peace agreements remain under increasing strain and are marked by high rates of relapse into conflict. Measuring the effectiveness of mediation is also becoming more difficult. The ability to achieve an agreement to end violence has been a standard method; however, this metric alone fails to properly assess the impact of the agreement in relation to the context and complexity of the conflict. Because peace processes are nonlinear and expand into multiple dimensions, it is impossible to assess their impact as a single process (Baumann and Clayton 2017).

Despite the changing nature of war and warring parties, the increasing internationalization and regionalization of conflicts, and the unprecedented acceleration in the speed and spread of information and knowledge, standard methods used in mediation are still predominantly trapped in linear and determined-designed thinking (Paffenholz 2021). From directed-mediation to facilitation, the mediators and the parties to the conflict might use a variety of techniques. Using directed-mediation techniques, the mediator strives to influence the parties' behavior both during and after the mediation. On the other hand, the mediator who acts as a

facilitator throughout the peace process is primarily concerned with acting as a moderator and developing trust between the parties. Facilitation can also provide facilities and resources, as well as safeguard against unwanted external disruption and interference.

ADAPTIVE MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMID INCREASING UNCERTAINTY

In the last decade, intrastate conflicts have become longer (protracted), more complex, and more frequent, not only in low-income but also in middle-income countries. As conflicts are by their nature complex and uncertain, contemporary conflict resolution is rendered even more complex by significant disruptions to and changes in the global order. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the unpredictability and uncertainty within the international peace mediation environment and significantly disrupted the way regional and international mediation teams operate. The pandemic had a reduced impact on the underlying causes or dynamics of violent conflicts. Instead, it was able to ramp up current armed conflict trends and provided armed groups with more strategic options. The weakening of state structures and lack of media attention resulting from the health crisis allowed for more military actions with less opposition (Ide 2021).

It is increasingly recognized that the standard methods used in mediation are inadequate for coping with the levels of uncertainty and complexity that most mediators face today. In this book, we will introduce an alternative method—Adaptive Mediation—that is specifically designed to cope with uncertainty and complexity. This method will be analyzed within the context of four contemporary case studies—Colombia, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Syria—to test its assumptions and learn from and refine the approach to adaptive mediation based on the empirical experiences of mediation in these cases.

Here, mediation is broadly understood as a third-party-facilitated peacemaking process that includes formal and informal talks, dialogues, and other confidence-building initiatives that lead up to formal negotiations, such as negotiations over humanitarian access, cease-fires, and comprehensive peace agreements. The standard mediation method can be described as determined-designed thinking. It is based on the assumption that mediation experts have the agency to analyze a conflict, identify its

root causes, and design solutions for the conflict based on international best practices. These options can then be presented to the conflicting parties in a mediation setting. Mediation is then understood as a process through which the parties, based on the information and analysis presented, will be led through a facilitated negotiation during which they should agree on one or more of the options presented to them.

In practice, most of the limited solutions offered follow a standard range of options, informed by the so-called best practices from other peace mediation experiences. The determined-design theory of change is flawed because social systems are empirically complex, highly dynamic, nonlinear, and emergent. This uncertainty is an intrinsic quality of complex adaptive systems, not a result of imperfect knowledge or inadequate analysis, planning, or implementation. This recognition has specific implications for the planning and implementation of mediation.

The adaptive mediation approach provides us with a methodology for coping with this complexity and uncertainty. Firstly, it recognizes that an analysis of the conflict system has to be emergent from a collaborative engagement with the parties to the conflict. A conflict analysis should not be developed by experts and presented to the parties to the conflict. It is something that has to be developed as a collaborative process with the parties to the conflict. Arriving at a shared understanding of the conflict is the first building block of the adaptive mediation process and a prerequisite for a self-sustainable mediated settlement. Secondly, based on such a shared understanding, the parties to the conflict should generate their own potential range of settlement options.

Generating a range of options together builds confidence and broadens the scope of potential solutions beyond the narrow range that parties typically enter a negotiation with. Generating future options can also be complemented with associated collaborative and inclusive processes such as national dialogues or other forms of popular consultation. Thirdly, adaptive mediation approaches recognize that a mediation process is not limited to one series of talks or agreements but is, in reality, a cumulative transition process that typically spans decades and includes negotiations and agreements on many aspects of the social contract that take place at different times and in different fora. It is thus important to think of mediation as a process, not an event, and to think about any agreement reached as one building block in this larger process. It thus takes a whole-of-system, relational, and spatial approach that is open-ended, fluid, and flexible. Adaptive mediation is an approach that shifts the focus of mediation

away from its fixation on the mediator, the mediation table, and the settlement agreement, instead approaching mediation as a participatory, adaptive, and iterative facilitation process that accompanies a society in its journey from conflict to sustainable peace.

Adaptive mediation differs from the mainstream determined-design and directed-mediation model in that it is an approach that is specifically designed to cope with the uncertainty, unpredictability, and irreproducibility inherent in the complex social change process. Adaptive mediation is a process that is aimed at empowering the parties participating in the mediation to generate solutions themselves. For a peace agreement to be self-sustainable, it has to emerge from both a collaborative process owned by the parties to the conflict and an inductive iterative adaptive engagement with the context. The role of the mediator is limited to facilitating the process. Adaptive mediation is especially concerned with enhancing the self-sustainability of peace agreements and, in this context, understands the role of the mediator as facilitating a process of emergent self-organization.

When this approach is applied to conflict analyses, planning, monitoring, and evaluation, the ability of mediation processes to navigate uncertainty and adapt to changing dynamics will be enhanced. In order for more resilient and more self-sustainable agreements to emerge, adaptive mediation requires mediators to apply a light touch that encourages greater interdependence among the parties and discourages dependence upon the mediator. As a result, utilizing an adaptive mediation approach should result in generating peace agreements that are more locally grounded, self-sustainable, and resilient to withstand setbacks and shocks.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book explores mediation practices in four conflict-affected countries: Colombia, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Syria. Each case study will examine several mediation episodes and the complexities of sustaining peace in situations of protracted and recurring conflicts. In these four cases, the authors will question and identify some of the limitations of determined-designed mediation efforts, explore the extent to which adaptive approaches to mediation have been implemented, and examine the effects of these initiatives. For that purpose, the authors have followed a common analytical framework and attempted to answer the research questions mentioned in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Research questions

Main research question	• How do mediators adapt to uncertainty and complexity in contemporary armed conflicts?
Case study research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key characteristics of standard or alternative, and formal or informal, mediation practices in your case study? • How did mediators or parties to the conflict adapt or fail to adapt to uncertainty and complexity in your case study? • Which mediation good practices or lessons learned can you extract from your case study?

By extracting empirical evidence from the structure and practice of mediation in various conflict-affected contexts, this study attempts to reveal the conditions under which different types of formal and informal mediation events occurred in four case studies with distinct features (see Table 1.2).

Given the diversity of geopolitical and socioeconomic contexts, the evidence and lessons learned from each case study should help mediators dealing with similar contexts of uncertainty and complexity. The authors of each chapter analyzed each conflict-affected situation and respective mediation initiatives using process tracing, archival and database research, and field or remote semi-structured interviews. While the theoretical chapter presents an alternative pathway for effective mediation in the context of a more complex and newly emerging international order, four case studies have explored the contemporary challenges, opportunities, and limitations of mediation activities on the ground.

In Chap. 2, Cedric de Coning introduces the adaptive mediation approach, explains its roots in the study of complex adaptive systems, and addresses the key principles and characteristics of adaptive mediation, informing contemporary peacemakers on how to plan, analyze, assess, and undertake adaptive mediation processes. The chapter examines the attributes of complex systems, namely systems dynamics, nonlinearity, and self-organization. In the process, it explores the relationship between complexity and adaptive mediation, introducing emergence, adaptation, and feedback in this context. The adaptive mediation approach highlights the role of the mediator as the facilitator of the mediation process and is especially concerned with enhancing the self-sustainability of peace agreements.

The authors of the country case studies applied the insights of adaptive mediation to the variety of practices observed in four contexts, reflecting

Table 1.2 The case studies and respective distinguishing features

<i>Case studies</i>	<i>Distinguishing features</i>
Colombia Latest peace agreement in 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of complexity and variety of nonstate actors in a long period of mediation with 12 processes occurring in parallel between 1991 and 2016. • Standard and adaptive mediation practices have coexisted and mediators focused on promoting institutional capacity building and communitarian bottom-up peacebuilding.
Mozambique Latest peace agreement in 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of a small-scale conflict recurrence, initial ineffective domestic and international mediation attempts led to a more effective process-facilitation of direct dialogue and adaptive mediation. • In the last mediation stage, the small mediation team's discretion and adaptiveness enabled positive outcomes in a nationally owned peace process.
The Philippines Latest peace agreement in 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive peace process featuring a multilayered mediation framework with insider mediators and development agencies playing a crucial role. • Peace gains were sustained by building trust among stakeholders through vertical and horizontal relations.
Syria At the time of writing, no peace agreement has been reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level international mediation was conditioned by structural factors but enabled various negotiation platforms. • A combination of standard and adaptive approaches enabled positive outcomes. Mediation efforts enabled humanitarian actions to save lives and paved the ground for the creation of a constitutional committee. The process became increasingly inclusive of civil society and women's groups.

on whether and how adaptive approaches have helped mediators cope with uncertainty and complexity, and the extent to which mediators and the parties to the conflicts in these case studies adapted (or not) to changing dynamics on the ground. It is important to note that the case study authors retroactively applied the adaptive mediation lens to these cases. Adaptive mediation is a new concept, and none of the mediators in these cases have consciously applied the approach. They have instead analyzed these four cases to see if there were elements of an adaptive mediation approach in the mediation styles applied in them, and what it is we can learn from those approaches and the results they have achieved.

In Chap. 3, Lina Penagos reflects on Colombia's mediation experiences during the last three decades, encompassing 12 peace processes between the Colombian government and various Non-State Armed Groups. From

the negotiation with the Popular Liberation Army in 1991 to the peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) in 2016, mediation initiatives in Colombia combined standard and adaptive approaches. Despite the variety of violent nonstate actors involved in lengthy and overlapping peace negotiations, in retrospect, Colombian mediation experiences show evidence of the flexibility and adaptiveness of domestic mediators often supported by the national government and external partners. The author focused on mediation initiatives that enabled institutional capacity building and effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration outcomes.

In Chap. 4, Rui Saraiva examines the adaptive nature of the new mediation process in Mozambique's recent small-scale armed conflict recurrence (2013–2019). This chapter extracts the key factors and strategies that enabled the signature of the Maputo Accord for Peace and Reconciliation on August 6, 2019. It argues that adaptive mediation and a nationally owned direct dialogue were essential to address the complexity of the conflict situation and the impact of unexpected events such as the sudden death of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) leader Afonso Dhlakama in 2018. The effectiveness of the later stage of the mediation process resulted from the discreet and adaptive strategies used by a small mediation team led by the Swiss Ambassador, Mirko Manzoni. Adaptive mediation in Mozambique accentuated the agency, interdependence, and direct dialogue between both parties, making it possible for peacemaking to emerge from within.

In Chap. 5, Miyoko Taniguchi explores the adaptation from outsider to insider mediation as a nonlinear process in response to the complexity of the protracted conflict and armed violence in Mindanao, the Philippines. For more than 50 years, continuous efforts by international and national mediators have been able to sustain peace in the region. This chapter identifies four factors that have led to the creation of a new autonomous region through a multilayered mediation framework that has broadened the definition of mediation from transitional (international-external-predetermined) to innovative (local-insider-adaptive). The author concludes that the adaptation from outsider to insider mediation, especially under the Duterte administration, fostered trust-building among the involved parties and increased the domestic ownership of the peace process.

In Chap. 6, Ako Muto examines standard and adaptive mediation approaches, efforts, and initiatives in the context of the Syrian armed

conflict. The author assesses the impact of domestic and external constraints in the mediation process and reveals how the mediators attempted, to varying degrees, to “adapt” to contextual complexities in unique ways. The Syrian mediation context struggled with the extensive fragmentation of NSAGs, and progress in the negotiations has been dependent on the consent of major conflict parties and respective external allies. This chapter demonstrates how standard and adaptive mediation approaches have coexisted and mitigated the impact of the conflict despite the fact that a peace agreement has not yet been reached. It underlines that adaptive approaches contributed to saving lives and finding inclusive ways for more Syrian civil society actors to participate in the ongoing peace process.

CONCLUSION

Many peace agreements today are signed or pursued amid volatile political instability and uncertainty. War and other forms of armed violence reoccur more often, as renewed tensions at the ground level frequently erupt not long after the signature of new peace accords, and while the underlying root causes of conflict remain to be adequately addressed by peacebuilding actions. The rise of violent extremism coexisting with traditional armed conflicts, the fragmentation and changing behavior of armed groups, the cross-border nature, and the increasing internationalization and regionalization of armed conflicts have all contributed to the ineffectiveness of dominant mediation strategies. Mediators often struggle with increasing uncertainty and unpredictability and more complex peace architectures than ever before. Previous determined-designed methods applied to interstate wars have been subsequently adjusted to increasingly complex intrastate conflicts and are now insufficient to respond to contemporary challenges.

Determined-designed mediation approaches are based on static and linear conflict analysis and planning. They lead mediators to seek cause-and-effect interactions, prompting surprise when unwanted results emerge. In addition, mediators following determined-designed approaches will undervalue the uniqueness of local contexts, while applying models that were used elsewhere but that might not work in a different context. Peace mediation has largely remained state-centric and continued to rely on determined-designed approaches. However, in the last decade, there has also been an increase in the number of peace mediation actors, including official actors such as small states and international organizations, and

private actors such as nongovernmental organizations, both attempting to implement alternative and innovative approaches.

In line with the current transformation of peacemaking practices and with the dialogic turn, adaptive mediation rests on the basis of two main pillars: self-organization and resilience. Mediators are encouraged to promote the national and local ownership of the mediation process (self-organization) and help conflict-affected societies to gain the capacity to deal with future shocks and uncertainty (resilience). An adaptive approach sees external mediators as facilitators of a process that emerges from within, with monitoring and evaluation activities focused on the ability of mediators to adapt to uncertainty and complexity rather than to achieve predetermined objectives. In this context, this book reflects on the limitations of standard determined-designed mediation approaches and introduces adaptive mediation as an alternative. This approach questions the top-down determined-design nature of mainstream mediation and calls for an approach where the role of mediator is to be limited to process facilitation and where the sustainability of peace agreements is to be grounded in the agency and participation of the parties to the conflict reaching their own context-specific agreements.

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